

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-05
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R 042130Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4670

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 3689

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, CI
SUBJECT: FAREWELL CALL ON PRESIDENT PINOCHET

1. SUMMARY: IN MAY 4 FAREWELL CALL ON PINOCHET I SAID I HOPED THAT ON BASIS OF FULL UNDERSTANDING OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE OUR RELATIONS. FOR THIS TO HAPPEN, RECENT POSITIVE TRENDS IN AREA OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS SHOULD BE COMTINUED AND EXPANDED. ON ECONOMIC SIDE I EXPRESSED HOPE THAT MAJOR FOREIGN INVESTMENT AGREEMENTS WOULD BE PROMPTLY CONCLUDED. PINOCHET SAID THAT THOUGH IT HAD BEEN COSTLY, CHILE HAD FOUND OTHER SOURCES FOR ARMS. HE WANTED U.S. TO UNDERSTAND THAT THOUGH CHILE HAD AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME IT WAS FAR FROM A TOTALITARIAN STATE. IT WOULD MOVE VERY GRADUALLY TOWARD REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS. HE WAS AWARE OF THE SOCIAL COSTS ENTAILED IN STRENGTHENING CHILE'S ECONOMY, AND THE GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING STEPS TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS, AT ALL LEVELS. END SUMMARY.

2. I BEGAN MY FAREWELL CALL ON PRESIDENT PINOCHET BY EXPRESSING MY GRATITUDE FOR THE MANY COURTESIES I HAD RECEIVED FROM THE GOC AND FOR THE FRIENDLINESS WHICH THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE HAD DEMONSTRATED IN SO MANY WAYS. I POINTED OUT THAT
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FOR MY WIFE AND ME THE YEARS IN CHILE, THOUGH NOT WITHOUT CHALLENGES AND DIFFICULTIES, HAD BEEN MOST HAPPY. I REGRETTED THAT DURING THESE YEARS THE TRADITIONALLY FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD BECOME STRAINED. THE HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S ADMINISTRATION HAD NOW BEEN SET FORTH IN FULL DETAIL. WE HAD KEPT THE FOREIGN MINISTER ADVISED IN THIS REGARD. I BELIEVED OUR VIEWS WERE

NOW UNDERSTOOD IN CHILE AND HOPED THAT ON THE BASIS OF THIS FULLER UNDERSTANDING IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS.

3. PINOCHET THANKED ME AND SAID THAT HE, TOO, REGRETTED THAT THE U.S. HAD "CLOSED MANY DOORS" TO CHILE, FOR INSTANCE IN ARMAMENTS, WHICH REQUIRED THAT THE GOC TURN ELSEWHERE TO ENSURE ITS SELF DEFENSE. FOREIGN PURCHASES WERE MORE COSTLY, BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAD SOME RESOURCES AND FORTUNATELY HAD SUCCESSFULLY FOUND OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPLY.

4. PURSUING THE THEME OF US/CHILE RELATIONS, I SAID THAT I THOUGHT A BASIS HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR IMPROVEMENT. THE EMBASSY HAD NOTED AND REPORTED TO WASHINGTON SOME SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. SPECIFICALLY, IN 1977, ACCUSATIONS OF TORTURE, ARBITRARY DETENTION AND MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE HAD DROPPED VIRTUALLY TO ZERO. I SAID THAT I HOPED THESE VERY POSITIVE TRENDS WOULD CONTINUE AND EXPAND.

5. PINOCHET THEN LAUNCHED INTO A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN AUTHORITARIAN STATE SUCH AS CHILE AND A TOTALITARIAN DICTATORSHIP. UNDER THE AUTHORITARIAN CHILEAN SYSTEM THE PEOPLE HAD A WHOLE SERIES OF RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES WHICH WERE UNKNOWN IN TOTALITARIAN COMMUNIST SOCIETIES -- AMONG THESE PRIVILEGES BEING THE RIGHT TO WORK ANYWHERE, RECEIVE ALL FOREIGN NEWS REPORTING, TRAVEL ANYWHERE, MARRY WHOMEVER ONE PLEASED, AND GENERALLY ENJOY THE FRUITS OF A FREE ECONOMY. PINOCHET SAID CRITICS WHO THOUGHT CHILE WAS A TOTALITARIAN STATE WERE JUST PLAIN WRONG. FURTHERMORE, A CONSTITUTION WOULD BE WRITTEN BASED ON A SERIES OF

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CONSTITUTIONAL ACTS, ALREADY PARTLY PREPARED, ONCE THESE HAD BEEN FULLY ELABORATED.

6. I SAID I BELIEVED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S POLICY WITH RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS WAS A POSITIVE APPROACH BASED AS MUCH ON ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PROGRESS AS ON RESTRICTIONS FOR ABUSES. I WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE CONSTRUCTIVE TRENDS WE HAD NOTED IN CHILE REGARDING INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS WOULD CONTINUE. DIRECTIONS AND TRENDS WERE IMPORTANT AND I HOPED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM WOULD SOON INCLUDE STEPS TOWARD A MORE REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM.

7. PINOCHET SAID THAT HIS PROGRAM OF "INSTITUTIONALIZATION" WOULD TAKE A GREAT DEAL OF TIME. DESTRUCTION WAS EASY -- THE UP HAD DESTROYED CHILE IN THREE YEARS. REBUILDING IT WOULD TAKE LONGER. HE ENVISAGED THE ADDITION TO THE COUNCIL OF STATE (NOW COMPOSED OF PERSONS APPOINTED AND SERVING EITHER EX OFFICIO OR ON THE PRESIDENT'S NOMINATION) OF A GROUP OF ELECTED PERSONS TO FORM A UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE. THIS LEGISLATURE WOULD THEN ELECT THE PRESIDENT. (THIS POINT WAS NEW TO US.)

8. TURNING TO ECONOMIC THEMES, HE NOTED THAT THE GOC'S GENERALLY MORE LIBERAL APPROACH WAS VIEWED SYMPATHETICALLY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTIAGO 3689

LIMDIS

BY THE U.S. THE NEW INVESTMENT LAW FOLLOWED PRINCIPLES WE SUPPORTD AND WAS ATTRACTIVE TO U.S. CAPITAL. IN ADDITION, THE FINANNIAL IMPROVEMENT, THOUGH COSTLY IN SOCIAL TERMS, HAD GIVEN CHILE A VERY SOUND CREDIT RATING WHICH HAD EVOKED U.S. PRIVATE BANK INTEREST. I HAD JUST TALKED TO THE SUPERIOR OIL PEOPLE, WHO WERE ON THE VERGE OF COMPLETING AN AGREEMENT WHICH WULD INVOLVE A VERY LARGE COPPER INVESTMENT. CHILE NEEDED OUTSIDE CAPITAL, MADE AVAILABLE ON MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY

TERMS FOR ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOHMENT.

9. PINOCHET RESPONDED THAT THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC BELT-TIGHTENING HAD BEEN NECESSARY SO THAT CHILE COULD RATIONALIZE ITS ECONOMIC SITUATION WITHOUT HELP FROM OTHERS -- AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT. THERE HAD BEEN SOCIAL COSTS, BUT NOW THAT THE BALANCE SHEET WAS IN ORDER HE WAS MOVING, AS HIS RECENT STATEMENTS INDICATED ON TO IMPROVE SALARIES, PARTICULARLY AT THE PROFESSIONAL LEVELS AND EMBARKING ON A MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM. I

INTERJECTED TO POINT OUT THAT IN MY RECENT VISITS TO POBLACIONES (SLUM AREAS), RELIGIOUS PERSONS HAD POINTED OUT THAT THE POOR PEOPLE THERE WERE THE LAST TO BENEFIT FROM IMPROVING ECONOMIC INDICATORS BECAUSE AS UNSKILLED LABORERS THEY WERE SO DEPENDENT
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FOR EMPLOYMENT ON THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

10. PINOCHET REPORTED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF THIS. THAT IS WHY THE GOVERNMENT WAS MOVING TO PUT ADDITIONAL FUNDS INTO THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR. HOWEVER, THE PROBLEM WAS RESISTANT TO SOLUTION PRECISELY BECAUSE THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE POBLADORES WERE UNSKILLED. IT WAS NECESSARY TO EMBARK ON MAJOR TRAINING PROGRAMS, TO DEVELOP SKILLED LABOR.

11. I CLOSED BY NOTING THAT WHILE MY SUCCESSOR HAD NOT YET BEEN NAMED, HE WOULD ARRIVE AT A MOMENT PROPITIOUS FOR IMPROVING U.S.-CHILE RELATIONS. NO DEVELOPMENT, I SAID, WOULD PLEASE ME MORE.

12. COMMENT: PINOCHET WAS CORDIAL AND RELAXED, AND THE DISCUSSION TOOK PLACE IN A "LET BYGONES BE BYGONES" ATMOSPHERE. HAVING BEEN A PREACHER IN THE WILDERNESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN CHILE, AND HAVING BEEN SO OFTEN A BEARER OF BAD TIDINGS TO THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT, I THOUGHT IT WELL TO TAKE MY LEAVE WITH AN EXPRESSION OF HOPE FOR IMPROVEMENTS. I HAVE TRIED TO POINT OUT THAT THE POSSIBILITY IS THERE. WHAT WILL HAPPEN DEPENDS ON THE GOC.
POPPER

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